

Governor Shapiro Implements Automatic Voter Registration in Pennsylvania, Joining Bipartisan Group of States That Have Taken Commonsense Step to Make Voter Registration More Streamlined and Secure

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Press Release

By automatically combining the verification processes of DMV registration and voter registration, Shapiro Administration will enhance the accuracy and security of Pennsylvania voter rolls while saving taxpayers time and money

Harrisburg, PA – Today, as part of the Shapiro Administration's commitment to ensuring free, fair, and secure elections, **Governor Josh Shapiro** announced that Pennsylvania has implemented automatic voter registration (AVR) for eligible Commonwealth residents obtaining driver licenses and ID cards at Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) driver and photo license centers. By implementing AVR, Pennsylvania joins a group of 23 states with leaders from both parties – including Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Georgia, Virginia, and West Virginia – who have taken this step to promote election security and save taxpayers time and money.

Starting today, Commonwealth residents who are obtaining new or renewed driver licenses and ID cards and are eligible to vote will be automatically taken through the voter registration application process unless they opt out of doing so. Previously, eligible voters were required to take additional steps to opt into the voter registration process. Today's changes also increase access to voter registration by adding instructions in five more languages, for a total of 31 languages.

"Pennsylvania is the birthplace of our democracy, and as Governor, I'm committed to ensuring free and fair elections that allow every eligible voter to make their voice heard," said **Governor Josh Shapiro**. "Automatic voter registration is a commonsense step to ensure election security and save Pennsylvanians time and tax dollars. Residents of our Commonwealth already provide proof of identity, residency, age, and citizenship at the DMV – all the information required to register to vote — so it makes good sense to streamline that process with voter registration. My Administration will keep taking innovative actions like this one to make government work better and more efficiently for all Pennsylvanians."

Pennsylvanians have been able to apply to register to vote during these visits at PennDOT centers since the 1993 passage of the National Voter Registration Act, which includes what is known as the motor voter law.

"Registering eligible Commonwealth residents to vote during their visits to driver and photo license centers is a commonsense action," **Secretary of the Commonwealth Al Schmidt** said. "The voter is already in a state government facility with their identification documentation in hand, and they will have their picture taken and sign their name electronically. Having all of that happen at the same time means the verification process is extremely secure and makes the registration process more efficient."

"At PennDOT, we're proud of our role in the voter registration process," said **PennDOT Secretary Mike Carroll**. "These latest enhancements are a great example of how, through constant collaboration with the Department of State, we work to make this process as efficient as possible for eligible Pennsylvania residents."

In other states, automatic voter registration has been shown to streamline the registration process for military families, who tend to move more often than other Americans. Automatically updating their voter registration information during their PennDOT visits will ensure that these families can continue to participate in the democracy they work so hard to defend.

AVR also reduces paper application processing burdens on county elections professionals. Electronic registrations recorded during driver's license center interactions are more secure and take a fraction of the time to process.

For local election officials, receiving automatic updates when residents obtain new identification – which residents often do when they change their name or address – will enhance efforts continuously underway to maintain the accuracy of Pennsylvania's voter rolls.

County election offices are often inundated with voter registrations and status updates during presidential and midterm election years and receive very few changes during municipal election years. With this new automated process, election officials' important work maintaining our voter rolls should be greatly streamlined and improved over the four-year election cycle.

Multiple studies – including a 2019 Brennan Center for Justice study and a 2021 study by the Public Policy Institute of California – have also found that automatic voter registration in other states has produced marked increases in the number of eligible voters added to the voter rolls and has produced appreciable increases in voter turnout.

As of December 2022, approximately 8.7 million Pennsylvanians were registered to vote; according to U.S. Census estimates, more than 10.3 million Commonwealth residents are eligible to register.

To be eligible to register to vote, applicants must:

- Be a U.S. citizen for at least 30 days before the next election,
- Be a resident of Pennsylvania and their election district for at least 30 days before the next election, and
- Be at least 18 years old on the date of the next election.

EXHIBIT 6

More information about voter registration and eligibility is available at vote.pa.gov/register.

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